

What is claimed:

1. A multi-media communication management system for operation with a plurality of subscriber stations, at least one of which is a configurable subscriber station that includes a subscriber interface selected from a subscriber voice interface, a graphic display and a subscriber voice interface, a high resolution full motion display and a subscriber voice interface, the multi-media communication management system comprising:

a network communication circuit for multi-media communication with said plurality of subscriber stations;

a session control circuit for establishing a communication session with each subscriber station through the network communication circuit comprising:

a subscriber communication state manager for communicating control messages to a configurable subscriber station for controlling operational states of said configurable subscriber station and for receiving a help function request from said configurable subscriber station;

means for identifying the subscriber interface of said configurable subscriber station; and

means, responsive to said help function request, for providing help information to said configurable subscriber station that is related to the operational state of said subscriber station and is in a multimedia format compliant with the subscriber interface of the configurable subscriber station.

2. The multi-media communication management system of claim 1, wherein the means for providing help information comprises:

means for selecting a help content file from a database of help content files, said selected help content file being associated with the operational state of said configurable subscriber station and in a file format that can be output through the subscriber interface of the configurable subscriber station; and

means for sending a content message, including at least a portion of the help content file, to said configurable subscriber station; and

means for sending a control message to said configurable subscriber station that instructs said configurable subscriber station to output said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message through the subscriber interface.

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3. The multi-media communication management system of claim 2, wherein the selected help content file includes at least one of:

10 a video file for output on the high resolution full motion display and a voice file, including voice information related to and synchronized with the video file for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a high resolution full motion display and subscriber voice interface;

15 at least one graphic display file for output on the graphic display and a voice file, including voice information related to the at least one graphic display file, for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a graphic display and subscriber voice interface; and

a voice file for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a subscriber voice interface.

20 4. The multi-media communication management system of claim 3, wherein the selected help content file includes a sequence of still graphic display files for output on the graphic display and a voice file, including voice information that is related to and synchronized with the sequence of still graphic display files for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a graphic display and subscriber voice interface.

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5. The multi-media communication management system of claim 4, wherein the help function request is a message provided by the configurable subscriber station indicating that a subscriber has activated a help button on the subscriber station.

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6. The multi-media communication management system of claim 5,

wherein the session control server further comprises:

means for sending a control message to the configurable subscriber station that instructs the configurable subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a help function request from the configurable subscriber station occurring while said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message is being output through the subscriber interface.

7. The multi-media communication management system of claim 1, wherein the help function request is a message provided by the configurable subscriber station indicating that a subscriber has activated a help button on the subscriber station.

8. The multi-media communication management system of claim 7, wherein the session control server further comprises:

means for sending a control message to the configurable subscriber station that instructs the configurable subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a help function request from the configurable subscriber station occurring while said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message is being output through the subscriber interface.

9. A multi-media communication management system for operation with a plurality of subscriber stations, each of which includes a help button and a multimedia subscriber interface, the multi-media communication management system comprising:

a network communication circuit for multi-media communication with said plurality of subscriber stations;

a session control circuit for establishing a communication session with each subscriber station through the network communication circuit comprising:

a subscriber communication state manager for communicating control

messages to each subscriber station for controlling the operational state of each subscriber station independent of each other subscriber station and for receiving an indication of subscriber activation of the help button on an identified subscriber station;

5 means for providing multimedia help information to the identified subscriber station that is related to the operational state of the identified subscriber station in response to a first receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button on the identified subscriber station;

10 means for sending a control message to the identified subscriber station that instructs the identified subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a second receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button on the identified subscriber station.

15 10. The multi-media communication management system of claim 9, wherein the second receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button occurs within a predetermined time window following the first subscriber activation of the help button.

20 11. A method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station that includes a subscriber interface selected from a subscriber voice interface, a graphic display and subscriber voice interface, a high resolution full motion display and subscriber voice interface, the method comprising:

25 communicating control messages to the configurable subscriber station over a network communication circuit for controlling operational states of the configurable subscriber station;

receiving a help function request from the configurable subscriber station over the network communication circuit;

30 identifying the subscriber interface of the configurable subscriber station;

providing, in response to a help function request, help information to the

configurable subscriber station that is related to the operational state of the configurable subscriber station and is in a multimedia format compliant with the subscriber interface of the configurable subscriber station.

- 5 12. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 11, wherein the step of providing help information comprises:

10 selecting a help content file from a database of help content files, said selected help content file being associated with the operational state of the configurable subscriber station and in a file format that can be output through the subscriber interface of the configurable subscriber station;

 sending a content message including at least a portion of the help content file to said configurable subscriber station; and

15 sending a control message to said configurable subscriber station that instructs the configurable subscriber station to output said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message through the subscriber interface.

- 20 13. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 12, wherein the selected help content file includes at least one of:

25 a video file for output on the high resolution full motion display and a voice file, including voice information related to and synchronized with the video file for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a high resolution full motion display and subscriber voice interface;

 at least one graphic display file for output on the graphic display and a voice file, including voice information related to the at least one graphic display file, for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a graphic display and subscriber voice interface; and

30 a voice file for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a subscriber voice interface.

14. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 13, wherein the selected help content file includes a sequence of still graphic display files for output on the graphic display
 5 and a voice file, including voice information that is related to and synchronized with the sequence of still graphic display files for output through the subscriber voice interface if the subscriber interface is a graphic display and subscriber voice interface.

10 15. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 14, wherein the help function request is a message provided by the configurable subscriber station indicating that a subscriber has activated a help button on the subscriber station.

15 16. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 15, further including:

20 sending a control message to the configurable subscriber station that instructs the configurable subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a help function request from the configurable subscriber station occurring while said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message file is being output through the subscriber interface.

25 17. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 11, wherein the help function request is a message provided by the configurable subscriber station indicating that a subscriber has activated a help button on the subscriber station.

30 18. The method of providing context dependent help services to a configurable subscriber station of claim 17, further including:

sending a control message to the configurable subscriber station that

instructs the configurable subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a help function request from the configurable subscriber station occurring while said at least a portion of the help content file contained in said content message is being output through the subscriber interface.

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19. A method of providing help services to a plurality of subscriber stations, each of which includes a help button and a multimedia subscriber interface, the method comprising:

10 communicating control messages to each subscriber station for controlling the operational state of each subscriber station independent of each other subscriber stations;

receiving a first and a second indication of subscriber activation of the help button on an identified subscriber station;

15 providing multimedia help information to the identified subscriber station that is related to the operational state of the identified subscriber station in response to a first receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button on the identified subscriber station; and

20 sending a control message to the identified subscriber station that instructs the identified subscriber station to establish a communication session with a help station in response to a second receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button on the identified subscriber station.

25 20. The method of providing help services of claim 19, wherein the second receipt of the indication of subscriber activation of the help button occurs within a predetermined time window following the first subscriber activation of the help button.

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